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161 A decree of January 9th, 1950, giving a new list of constituencies for
167 the Supreme Soviet elections established four new constituencies in the Far East. The constituency of Khabarovsk was divided into a town and a country constituency, another new constituency was formed around the Okhotsk Sea and two more constituencies were created on Sakhalin. The total population of the Soviet Far East would accordingly have been, in 1950, in the neighbourhood of 4,200,000. It is, however, unlikely that this figure was really reached. The population of each of the three Sakhalin constituencies, in particular, may be considerably below the 300,000 mark.

III. THE SOVIET FAR EASTERN MYSTIQUE

186 The Soviet régime worked for the strengthening of the Russian Far
208 East not only by mobilizing manpower for its colonization, but also by building up a Far Eastern 'mystique', a nationalistic ideology which flattered national pride to the utmost degree. After the end of the Second World War the Soviet Government, with the help of a large army of historians, writers and poets, promoted a cult of Russian heroes of the Pacific. The object of the new propaganda campaign was to show that Russians had played an outstanding part in the discovery of the Pacific and that, by their past records, they were entitled to much more influence in decisions concerning Pacific affairs than the 'imperialist powers' were ready to grant them. The campaign was also intended to prove that Czarist Russia had failed to grasp the opportunities offered to her in the North-West Pacific and that the Soviet Union defended energetically those national Russian interests in the Far East which the old régime had neglected.

RUSSIAN COLUMBUSES

186 To proceed in a strict chronological order the first 'Russian hero of the
208 Pacific' to be mentioned is Semen Dezhnev. Soviet propaganda
159 popularized him particularly in connection with the tercentenary in 1948 of the discovery of the Behring Strait, which separates Asia from America. The Danish explorer, Vitus Behring, after whom the strait is called, may only have rediscovered it one hundred years after Dezhnev had sailed around the 'nose of Asia', the north-eastern tip of Siberia. As late as the nineteenth century, some outstanding Russian scholars still doubted whether Dezhnev could really be credited with this daring feat. Soviet writers, however, are quite positive about Dezhnev's pioneer role. In 1945 the Chief Administration of the Northern Sea Route issued a popular book on Dezhnev, which waived aside all doubts as to Dezhnev's voyage, and described Dezhnev himself as 'a glorious representative of the all-enduring Russian people'.[88]

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The next 'Soviet hero' operated on the other side of the Behring Strait, in what, until 1867, was called 'Russian America'. He was the Russian merchant, Grigory Ivanovich Shelikhov, who, in 1784, founded the first permanent Russian settlements in Alaska. Shelikhov's contemporary, the great poet Derzhavin, called him the 'Russian Columbus'. This description, 'Russian Columbus', plays a great part in Soviet propaganda. Because of a feeling of inferiority, *vis-à-vis* the Western World, the Soviet Union has claimed a large number of inventions and geographical discoveries for the Russians, including the discovery of America. Columbus discovered only the American East coast. North-West America was a Russian discovery for which the credit goes in the first place to Shelikhov. It is obvious that the Russians of the Soviet Far East and of Eastern Siberia are most easily attracted by the idea of a 'Russian Columbus'. The Mayor of Irkutsk and the head of the Irkutsk provincial administration have been in the forefront of those who have advocated a systematic publicity campaign for extolling Shelikhov's memory. These two, together with seven other distinguished Soviet citizens, demanded in a letter to the Moscow *Literary Gazette* in October 1950, that Shelikhov should be honoured lavishly on the 155th anniversary of his birthday. In the centre of Irkutsk a Shelikhov monument ought to be erected, they recommended. The Ministry for Cinematography was to produce a film on the 'Russian Columbus', the All-Union Society for the Dissemination of Scientific and Political Knowledge to organize lectures throughout the country about his life and deeds, and the State Publishing House for Geographical Literature was to publish his biography.[39] Since then many of these demands have probably been carried out.

Shelikhov's epithet, 'Russian Columbus', has frequently been challenged. Russian historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries considered Shelikhov a braggart who greatly exaggerated his Alaskan exploits, and in particular, the number of Alaskan natives converted to Christianity, so as to get larger subsidies for his trading firm. This poor view of Shelikhov was taken by the pre-revolutionary *Russian Encyclopedia*, and the first edition of the *Soviet Encyclopedia* has not corrected it. According to the latter, Shelikhov was just a 'representative of merchant capitalism' not worthy of major attention. Nevertheless, Shelikhov was a man of vision. He conceived the bold plan of a Russian Empire in the North-West Pacific which would have its granary in California and its naval base in the Hawaiian Islands. Shelikhov also wanted to encourage trade relations with China, Japan and India, and he dreamt of voyages to the Philippines, and even to the North Pole.

Shelikhov's successor, Aleksandr Andreevich Baranov, who started a more systematic exploitation of Russian America by founding the 'Russian-American Company', has also his place in the Soviet pantheon.

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Baranov is venerated as a 'self-sacrificing patriot', and a manual for Soviet teachers gives the following appraisal of him: 'Baranov, this outstanding personality, during twenty-eight years kept the administration of Russian America firmly in his hands. Thanks to his personal courage and keen intelligence he opened up and explored its vast spaces. In a hard struggle with privations, the hostility of militant tribes and the mean intrigues of foreign merchants, he established Russian rule over the huge territories of Alaska and Northern California'.[30] Baranov has also become the hero of an historical novel. The author of the novel, Ivan Kratt, described Baranov and his associates as modest and just people, without prejudice against natives, and loved by everybody with the exception of a few villains.[31]

'RUSSIAN AMERICA'

Among Baranov's collaborators there is one whom the Soviet régime has particularly singled out for posthumous glorification, Ivan Kuskov. Until the beginning of 1948, Kuskov's name was unknown even to many well-educated Russians. The Soviet Government rescued it from oblivion by a propaganda campaign on a large scale, which started in Torma, a small town in the Northern Russian Province of Vologda. The town council of Torma met and decided to erect a monument to Kuskov. The importance of this gesture might have escaped the peoples of the Soviet Union had not the Russian Press explained and advertised it all over the country. Kuskov appeared as the man who, acting under Baranov's general orders, had extended Russian America from Alaska to California. It was he, who, in 1812, had hoisted the Russian flag at the entrance of San Francisco Bay and founded 'Fort Ross', the southernmost Russian-occupied point on the American continent.

Not only the biographies of people like Shelikhov, Baranov and Kuskov have been reinterpreted, but the entire history of 'Russian America'. Alaska is not a conquest of Russian Czarism and imperialism, but belongs to 'democratic Russia', to 'people's Russia'. 'The settlement of Alaska by Russians', said the *Literary Gazette*, 'bore a clearly expressed labouring and democratic character dissimilar to the trade-plundering colonization by the Anglo-Saxons, who recruited their agents from among tramps, adventurists and criminals'.[32] The same point is elaborated in greater detail in what is purported to be a popular scientific booklet on the history, geography and economic conditions of Alaska. There, it is said that the colonization of Alaska was progressive because most of the Russian settlers were peasants, eager to shake off the arbitrary rule of the estate owners. Many people went to Alaska because they found the oppressive atmosphere of the Czarist régime unbearable. Others were sent there because of their political con-

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victions. Not only was the colonization of Alaska itself 'progressive' and 'democratic', the management of the Russian-American Company also was. One of its chief executives, K. F. Ryleev, was executed for his part in the December rising of 1825, and there were other prominent 'Decembrists' among the officials of the Company.[33]

Soviet propaganda has tried to show that Baranov and Kuskov conducted a progressive policy towards the natives of North America, totally different from the Anglo-Saxon or Spanish policy towards Red Indians. This is untrue and has been contradicted by Russian sources themselves. A Russian naval officer, who visited Alaska at the time of Russian occupation, has given the following eloquent description of Baranov's policy towards Eskimos and Aleuts: 'Woe to those who resisted him. He destroyed them mercilessly, deported them to uninhabited islands, deprived them of all means of contact with each other, and mixed people of various tribes so that there could be no malicious conspiracy against the Russians. He was feared by the savages, they considered him as the scourge of heaven. Since they had no chance to revolt they were forced to become his slaves and to forget all about their previous freedom'.[34] As a matter of fact, the Aleuts revolted against Russian rule, as the Russian historian, Shashkov, pointed out in his book on the Russian-American Company, and these revolts led to the extermination of a large part of 'this restless people'. How many Aleuts have perished altogether in the years of Russian rule it is impossible to say. According to the official data of the Russian-American Company there were 8,405 Aleuts in Alaska in 1824, but only 4,363 were recorded in 1859. It would be true to say, therefore, that Russian colonization of Alaska was, from the humanitarian point of view, by no means better than, say, British colonization of Australia in its initial stage.

Nevertheless, Russian policy towards the native peoples of Russian America did have its brighter aspects. Those responsible for it, however, were not Shelikhov, Baranov and the other newly discovered national heroes of Soviet Russia, but people whom the Soviet régime is not very keen on publicizing, the Christian missionaries. It was they who founded the first schools in Alaska, educated a fair number of natives, and even translated religious books into the Aleut language. The most important Russian churchman working in Alaska was Ivan Veniaminov (1797–1879). He was the author of a grammar of the Aleutian language which was published in St. Petersburg in 1846. The 'apostle of Alaska', as the Russian historian, Zernov, calls him, became later, under the name of Innokentii, Metropolitan of Moscow.[35]

The scope of these Russian church activities was, however, very small and one cannot say that the end of Russian rule in Alaska, in 1867, meant in any way a major loss to the native peoples; but of course it was, historically speaking, a great loss for the Russian State. Soviet Russia was

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more conscious of this loss than Czarist Russia had ever been. In Soviet political literature published after the Second World War the abandonment of the Russian outposts in California in the 'forties' and the sale of Alaska to the United States appear not only as regrettable blunders, but almost as acts of treason on the parts of the Czarist Government. 175

THE RUSSIAN PACIFIC

Russian traditions in the Pacific, as presented by Soviet propaganda, are by no means confined to Russian rule over Alaska and 'Fort Ross'. Quite a number of Russian naval expeditions took place throughout the nineteenth century in various parts of the Pacific Ocean. The public, and particularly Soviet youth, has been acquainted with them since 1945 in various ways. Stories about these expeditions have been written anew, in the form of historical novels or of straightforward descriptions, with the obvious object of stimulating national pride. 186 208

From this patriotic Soviet Russian literature centring on the Pacific one can learn a great deal – for instance, that the Russians discovered as many as 400 small Pacific islands, more particularly those belonging to the Paumotu Archipelago in the South-East Pacific, and some of the Marshall Islands. All these islands had been named after Russian generals in the war against Napoleon, and other famous Russian historical figures. Some of the Russian names still persist. Thus the, Lisiansky Island, a possession of the U.S.A., east of Midway Island, bears the name of a well-known Russian seafarer, and east of Samoa there still exists a Suvorov Island belonging to Britain. Also, the big island of New Guinea has important Russian associations. Russians are not credited with its discovery, it is true, but it was a Russian scholar to whom was due the first detailed description of the Papuan people. The Russian explorer, Miklukho-Maklay (1846–88), spent some time with the Papuans. The result of his observations was included in his diaries, which were not published until the Soviet régime came to power. As the Russian geographer, L. S. Berg, puts it, Miklukho-Maklay died before he succeeded in writing his fundamental scholarly works, but, even so, he is highly honoured in the Soviet Union. After all, he was the first Russian to demand that Russia should have a colony in the Pacific.[36] The Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences has been called after him and a play 'White Friend' has been produced in which he is the central figure. He appears there as the 'champion of black and coloured peoples enslaved by the colonizers of the West'.[37] 186 208 103

'NEVELSKOY'S IMMORTAL FEAT'

For Soviet patriotic ideology one historic personality is more important 186 208 159

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than all those mentioned so far, Admiral Gennady Ivanovich Nevelskoy (1813–76). The entire modern Russian Far Eastern policy goes back to his geographical discoveries. They resulted in the Russian annexation of the entire Lower Amur region up to the Ussuri confluence, as well as in the Russian seizure of Sakhalin. Until Nevelskoy's expedition, the Amur was not recognized as a 'useful' river and a channel of Russian expansion, nor was it known that Sakhalin was an island and not a peninsula. Nevelskoy, who had sailed from Kronstadt across the Atlantic and the Pacific, on August 13th, 1850, hoisted the Russian flag at the point of the Amur estuary which later became known as the town Nikolayevsk Amursky. Hence, the Amur region became the only part of Russia which was annexed by a naval expedition. Nevelskoy's 'immortal feat' enabled the Russian Empire to concentrate in its Far Eastern policy on areas close to the Chinese border, instead of using up its efforts in the distant Kamchatka or even Alaska. On the one-hundredth anniversary of Nevelskoy's appearance in the Amur estuary, the Soviet régime expressed its appreciation of the courageous seafarer in no unmistakable terms. A monument was erected in his honour in the town of Nikolayevsk and a number of popular books were published on the occasion. The Publishing House of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, 'Molodaya Gvardiya', brought out an historical novel largely dealing with Nevelskoy, and the State Publishing House for Çultural and Educational Literature produced a biography of the admiral.[38]

PORT ARTHUR

The gallery of heroes of the Russian Far East would be incomplete without mentioning the defenders of the Russian fortress Port Arthur during the Russo-Japanese War. When Port Arthur fell, Lenin wrote that the Russian proletariat had every reason to rejoice at 'progressive and advanced Asia inflicting an irreparable blow on backward and reactionary Europe'. When looking back on the defence and doom of Port Arthur, Stalin's Russia, however, takes no guidance from Lenin, but from the son of a Czarist officer, Stepanov, who, in 1905, belonged to the garrison of the besieged fortress. This man published, in 1944, an historical novel on Port Arthur which earned highest praise in the most authoritative Soviet circles. The book, which also served as the basis of a play, was, in the first place, a tribute to two great Russian patriots, Admiral Makarov, Commander of the Russian Pacific fleet and General Kondratenko, the main embodiment of the spirit of resistance in Port Arthur. Stepanov did not consider that the defence of Russia's naval base in the Pacific was merely an imperialistic affair. For him there existed the most intimate link between Port Arthur and the entire Russian people. This he expressed by letting General Kondratenko

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make the following appeal to his soldiers: 'Behind us has been left but a narrow strip of Russian land with the town of Port Arthur. *This is our Russian town*: for its construction we have spent millions of our national income and invested a great amount of work. You yourselves have worked to build up the fortifications and batteries. And besides, in Port Arthur is our Fleet. We have to defend stubbornly our positions. The whole fatherland is following the course of the war and the defence of Port Arthur with breathless attention. Let us give all our forces, and if necessary, our lives in order to uphold in dignity the glory of the Russian arms in the Far East'. The book from which these lines are quoted was an ideological preparation for the re-establishment, in 1945, of a Russian naval base in Port Arthur, 'the town of Russian glory', as it is usually referred to.

SERGEY LAZO

The Soviet régime itself has not been able to make any substantial addition to the impressive gallery of heroes of the Russian Far East from Dezhnev to Admiral Makarov. Such 'heroes' as there emerged under Soviet rule, Marshal Blyukher in particular, were liquidated by the Cheka-G.P.U.-N.K.V.D. There is only one important exception to this rule the guerilla leader of the Civil War in the Far East – Sergey Lazo. Lazo was an officer of the Czarist army who went over to the revolutionary camp and joined the Bolshevik Party in the middle of 1918. He fought courageously against the White Guards and the Japanese in the Pacific coastal areas. In 1920 the latter burnt him alive in Vladivostok when he was only twenty-eight years old.

The way in which Lazo died predestined him to become not only a hero of the Soviet Far East, but also a symbol of Russian resistance to Japanese militarism and imperialism. Whenever the name of Lazo was mentioned – in newspaper articles and history books, in songs and in plays – it was meant as a challenge to Japan. But as history in the Soviet Union is always rewritten and reinterpreted in accordance with the propaganda interests of the moment, the personality of Lazo has undergone a revaluation. After the Second World War he became an anti-American figure as well as being an anti-Japanese one. According to an up-to-date version of Lazo's biography, the responsibility for his death lay jointly with the Japanese and the Americans. He was killed 'with the knowledge and agreement' of the American interventionists.[39] A book which prominently featured Lazo's part in the political and military events that took place in the Russian Far East in 1918, N. Kolbin's *Partisans* (*Partizany*), was rewritten with the express purpose of denouncing American intervention. The first edition of the book, which the Far Eastern state publishing house 'Dalgiz' brought out in

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1948, had only been anti-Japanese. In response to criticism in the official press the author produced, in 1951, a second edition of the same book into which a number of anti-American passages had been inserted.[40]

The interpretation of the personality of Lazo underwent a change in another direction also. Originally, Lazo appeared in Soviet propaganda as an international communist fighting for the victory of the World Revolution in the Far East. As time went on this international aspect was pushed into the background, and Lazo was transformed into a patriotic Russian, although, being a Moldavian of Swiss extraction, he had not a drop of Russian blood in his veins.[41] The favourite quotation which Soviet propagandists of the later period picked out of Lazo's statements reflects indeed a most patriotic frame of mind: 'We shall fight with our lives for the homeland against foreign invaders. For this Russian land on which I am standing now we shall die and shall not give it up to anyone'.[42] It must be admitted that the Russian patriot, Lazo, appeals much more than the communist guerilla leader. A man like Lazo would have become a national hero anywhere in the world, for a person who is killed by foreign invaders under dramatic circumstances always occupies an honourable place in the history of his nation.

These few examples may suffice to characterize the new Pacific 'mystique' which the Soviet régime has created. The whole Russian people is to be indoctrinated with the new Pacific ideology, but in the first place, this ideology is intended as a moral equipment for the Russian settlers on the Pacific coast. They are to be made more sure of themselves, and more ready to overcome difficulties by instilling into them the proud feeling that they are the successors of Dezhnev and Shelikhov, of Kuskov and Nevelskoy, and also, of course, of Sergey Lazo.

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